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20 July 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Sprague Committee Paper on Research
Program

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1. This memorandum is for the information of the DCI.
 2. Annexed hereto are comments on the Sprague Committee report prepared by the CA Staff of DDP.

[redacted] and a study on research on foreign areas prepared by the External Research Division of OIR.

3. The Sprague Committee paper strikes me as one of the least impressive efforts of the Committee staff. For one thing, the definition of research which is used seems too vague to make the points of the paper entirely comprehensible. The paper seems to me to confuse the collection of information, the dissemination of information and the application of judgment to the planning and decision making process with research in the sense of the retrieval, collation and analysis of information. The dictionary definition of research incidentally is, "1. careful search; close searching.
2. studious inquiry;"

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4. Examples of this confusion appear to me to be:

Page 3. The next to last paragraph relates research to policy decisions in a rather vague way.

Page 4. The decisions referred to (last full paragraph under General Strategy) certainly require thought and judgment on the basis of a factual assessment of relevant problems. I am skeptical as to whether the validity of opinions on these issues would be much enhanced by development of larger research facilities than exist today.

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Page 7. (Last two sentences of second paragraph.) The reference appears to be to information, i.e. intelligence, required for planning (not strictly research).

Page 14. Again on this page the reference to CIA suggests that research is confused with the acquisition and dissemination of information. Obviously CIA engages in a great deal of research. ORR, for example, services a number of customers in the Government and meets their research requirements with its own facilities and, where necessary, by employing outside contractors. The extent of the external research program conducted by CIA appears to be overlooked in the report.

Page 19. Again the problem of dissemination of information or intelligence appears to be confused with research.

5. As regards the specific conclusions of the paper beginning on page 20:

Paragraphs 1. and 2., seem too harsh and do not appear to give adequate recognition to the scope and value of existing research facilities.

Paragraph 3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of foreign information programs could certainly be improved and a recommendation to this effect would appear to be valid.

Paragraph 4. I question very seriously the value of a "research broker", at least in CIA. Such a broker would obviously serve no purpose in stimulating or guiding the research which the Agency performs as a functional responsibility for outside customers. Operational components of the Agency which require research support will rely initially at least on the services of research components of the Agency itself, which are considerable. If external research is involved channels already exist to provide access to research facilities such as [redacted] and other institutions and individuals. To the extent that access to the results of research in other departments and agencies of the Government is necessary or

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desirable, this can usually be arranged through normal liaison channels. The establishment of a single "research broker" to deal on behalf of CIA with other agencies of the Government would, I believe, seriously complicate these normal liaison relationships.

Paragraph 5. The proposal to ensure coordination of research through an inter-agency committee has very considerable merit. The Social Science Research Group which formerly existed under CIA could very well be reactivated. Moreover, a central index which serves to ensure that all current research material and finished studies are accessible to any interested agencies seems very desirable. To some degree this service is currently performed by the Internal Research Division of OIR in the State Department, to the support of which CIA contributes substantially.

We do not, however, concur in the suggestion that there be a central group to "guide" programs. To summarize, it would seem that a clearing house for information on research activity and facilities is desirable. We do not think that a central authority to guide and prescribe lines of research would be desirable.

Paragraph 6. The first sentence of this paragraph again assumes the desirability of integration of the total research effort of the Government. This does not seem to us a desirable step.

Paragraph 9, which suggests the creation of additional instruments for research, outside the Government, may overlook the existence of a number of existing facilities such as

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cc: DDCI
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